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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

WASHINGTON, D. C. 20505

PUBLIC AFFAIRS
Phone: (703) 482-7676

21 October 1986

Mr. Earl W. Foell
Editor in Chief
CHRISTIAN SCIENCE MONITOR
One Norway Street
Boston, MA 02115

Dear Mr. Foell:

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In his article "What Do You Mean, a 'Private' Operation?" (CHRISTIAN SCIENCE MONITOR, 16 October 1986), Joseph Harsch misleads the MONITOR's readers by falsely alleging that the cargo plane which recently crashed in Nicaragua was on a CIA operation. President Reagan stated that the CIA was not involved with the plane and its crew. The State Department, members of the intelligence oversight committees, and the Agency itself have made similar on-the-record denials.

The fact is that the CIA was prohibited by law from any connection with such a flight and the Agency has meticulously observed this prohibition, as our overseers in the Congress are well aware.

Since any Agency officer who violates U.S. law in the manner Mr. Harsch suggests can go to jail, I challenge him to present any evidence he may have concerning Agency malfeasance in this case to the Department of Justice for confirmation and possible prosecution. He also should send copies to the intelligence oversight committees.

I know that Mr. Harsch cannot prove what he is asserting and neither can anyone else. Mr. Harsch owes the employees of this Agency an apology for his outrageous defamation of them.

Sincerely,

George W. Lauder

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George W. Lauder
Director, Public Affairs

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